Referring to the retrenchments proposed to be effected in the department, the Member expressed his disapproval of the abolition of Range Inspectorships and Assistant Inspectorships of English schools.

A special school for the deaf and dumb was a desideratum in the State. He referred to the useful work done by such an institution at Palamcottah, and requested that an institution for the deaf and dumb, similar to that institution, be established in Travancore also, and that stipends be given to the deaf and dumb that proceeded to the special school at Palamcottah.

The Member then proceeded to point out certain defects in the working of the Music Board which, as now constituted, did not work on a satisfactory basis. The Board should consist of experts and not, as at present, merely of people who knew the science of music in theory and whose only qualification was that they could appreciate music. In the Music examinations conducted at present many managed to pass in theory, but failed in the practical test. If a candidate passed in theory and failed in practice, it should be enough for him or her to appear again for the practical test. More care had also to be bestowed on the way in which the examination was conducted. In one of the recent examinations the name of a candidate who passed in the first class was omitted in the examination results first published. Such mistakes should be avoided. Representative musicians from different parts of the State should be put on the Board.

In regard to the grant of the English School Leaving Certificates, the Member observed that those candidates who were declared eligible for admission to the College were not admitted for service in the Education Department. The rule was that the pupils should have obtained five marks above the State average. That was an undesirable distinction. He had represented the same matter at the last session, but his request was not complied with. He prayed for a re-consideration of the order.

Dewan's reply.—You have referred to a number of points. That aided education is cheaper than departmental education is beyond dispute. Your suggestion in regard to the method of calculating grants need not also be disputed. In regard to new schools, you say that the old rule that no new school should be opened in close proximity to an existing school is being broken. You have not given previous notice on this subject. What strikes me at present is that distance cannot be the only matter for consideration in such cases.

In regard to medical aid, it is true that the Government order says that, in regard to children in aided schools, the managers will have to pay the medical fees. I do recognise the force of your objection that the order introduces an undesirable distinction between the children of the two sets of schools, departmental and aided, in the matter of health. I shall consider the matter further.

In regard to retrenchment, the Salaries Committee's proposals are under the consideration of Government. They are considering the matter very carefully and will issue the necessary orders shortly.

You say that it is necessary to open a deaf and dumb school here on the model of the one at Palamcottah. I am not quite sure whether a school of that type is urgently needed here. Government are giving a grant to the Palamcottah School, and, if there are any Travancore youths who want to be educated there, the Government would favourably consider the question of aiding them.

You have referred to the public examinations in Music, and the Music Board. I shall ask the Director to investigate the matter.

In regard to the English School Leaving Certificate, you raised the point last year also and a reply has already been sent to you, but I have no objection to go into the question again.

115. Grant-in-aid Vernacular Schools and their administration.

Mr. Paul Daniel M. A., L. T. (Member, Municipal Council, Nagercoil) represented that the policy pursued by the Department in the administration of

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

aided vernacular schools appeared to be based on the assumption that every manager of such schools and every teacher employed in them deliberately aimed at getting from the Government as much money as possible in the shape of grant-in-aid by all kinds of evasion. It was clearly a case of misunderstanding, if not wilfully misconstruing, the object which these managers had in view. The schools were opened and maintained to afford facilities to the children of the locality to secure an elementary knowledge of the 3 R's. No manager could possibly gain a pie by maintaining vernacular schools. He then proceeded to substantiate his contention that the managers were treated as rivals in the field of education or as a set of men whose avaricious propensities should be vigilantly watched and curbed. In the matter of grants, the manager tried to obtain the maximum aid according to the rules, while the Department tried to cut it down to the lowest limit possible by having recourse to all sorts of devices. As in this the power of disposal rested with the Department, the manager had the worst of it. By way of example he said that the ruling of Government that two teachers of aided schools who had to their credit 10 years of approved service should be regarded as trained teachers was treated practically as a dead letter. Alterations in the grant if they adversely affected the manager, were made with the greatest promptitude, whereas, if they were to benefit him, they could never get effected. If, in a class which started at the beginning of the school year with 30 pupils on the rolls and was in receipt of grant-in-aid for some months, the number on the rolls went down to 24, the grant for the class was at once withdrawn. This procedure could have no justification, since the grant was awarded at the beginning of the year when all the rules for the award of grant were satisfied and since the manager would be put to considerable difficulties to continue the class till the end of the year, a mere fall in numbers being an incident over which the manager had no control. He requested that, if the fall in numbers was not due to any fault on the part of the manager or teacher concerned, the grant should be continued till the end of the year for which the grant had been sanctioned.

As regards attendance, the Member said that the strict enforcement of the existing rule worked hardship, the rule in force being that, if the average attendance in any class or school fell below 75 per cent, the class or school concerned forfeited the grant. To enforce this rule strictly was to misunderstand the real condition of Village Primary Schools. He dwelt at length on the difficulties experienced by the Village Primary School teachers in the matter of the regular attendance of their pupils, especially during seasons of festival, marriage festivities, sowing and harvest. They had to go from house to house and persuade the pupils and their guardians to maintain the average attendance. Hard and fast rules in the matter placed the conscientious teacher at a great disadvantage, while unscrupulous teachers found it easy to get over the difficulty by cooking up figures. In the circumstances, the Member submitted that, when once a school was found to be necessary for a locality and a grant-in-aid was accordingly sanctioned, any withdrawal of the aid should be resorted to only after it had been conclusively shown that the parents and pupils of the locality had lost all sense of the need and value of the school.

Coming to the amount of the grant given for teachers, the Member thanked the Government for enhancing the grant from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7½. Considering the poor lot of vernacular school teachers in spite of the enhanced grant, the Member requested that a Provident Fund might be started for them.

Speaking on the task laid on the vernacular school teachers, the Member said that the pressure of the Department on the aided schools was in inverse ratio to the standard, and that the number of the notices, circulars, urgent memos and very urgent letters sent to the Headmasters of Primary Schools was simply appalling. Returns called for once a year in the English Department were demanded 12 times more in the year in the Vernacular Department. The monthly return contained no less than 32 columns to be filled up for each class, this having replaced a much simpler statement. A summary of this was to be supplied every quarter. Besides these, every now and then urgent requisitions for information already supplied in the returns were made, evidently due

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

to the fact that the returns were not carefully examined. The Member handed over a few of the many letters he had to substantiate his statement.

The Member then said that the language used in the circulars to the Tamil Primary Schools was either Malayalam or English, mostly Malayalam, that they were so written that it was impossible to decipher them, and that sometimes they had to be returned, it being impossible to read and answer them.

The Member concluded by saying that interference in the internal working of the schools was becoming intolerable and that the administration of vernacular schools was fast becoming an unbearably hard office and paper administration, instead of being an agency to guide and direct the teachers in their arduous task of moulding the plastic minds of little boys and girls.

Dewan's reply.—You have raised a very important question. If all that you say is in part at least correct, I think that a thorough reform is called for. I can, however, say nothing definitely before referring your observations to the Director of Public Instruction for detailed remarks and before examining the several points which you have raised. That will be done as soon as practicable.

116. Tamil Education.

Mr. S. Ganapati Pillai (Member, Trading Classes, Trivandrum) referred to his representation at the last session of the Assembly on the subject and requested that the grievances therein brought to notice might be redressed at an early date.

The Member then said that, in the purely Tamil taluks of the State excepting Devicolam, viz., Tovala, Agastisvaram and Shencottah, the Department conducted 33 Tamil and 19 Malayalam schools and that there were 105 Tamil and 2 Malayalam schools conducted by private agencies, the 2 Malayalam schools being unrecognised ones. The total Malayalam population of the three taluks as per the Census of 1911 was 2,873, while the total Tamil population was 1,70,480, the children of school-going age calculated on the 15 per cent basis being 431 and 25,572 respectively. This worked out at one school for every 20 Malayalam pupils and 185 Tamil pupils respectively. He then said that the number of pupils in the 138 Tamil schools was 12,681 and in the 19 Malayalam schools 3,582, and that, of the latter, the vast majority were Tamil pupils, obliged to study Malayalam for want of Tamil schools. The Member submitted that the above figures would show clearly that the people left to themselves wanted only Tamil education to be imparted to their children and that the teaching of Malayalam was forced by the Department on an unwilling people.

The Member then turned his attention to the taluks where the population was in part Malayalam and mostly Tamil, viz., Eraniel, Kalkulam, Vilavankod and Peermade, and showed that there also the number of Malayalam schools maintained by the Department was out of all proportion to the Tamil schools. From the above it would be clearly seen that Tamil was given a stepmotherly treatment in comparison with Malayalam; the policy adopted by the Government in this matter was wrong; and this result was brought about by the vernacular branch of the Department being under the control of officers who knew only Malayalam and Sanskrit. He urged that all the existing Malayalam departmental schools in the purely Tamil taluks should be abolished and that, in the mixed taluks, a re-arrangement of schools should at once be made, as many of the departmental Malayalam schools as possible being converted into Tamil schools, to suit local requirements.

The Member next said that most of the Tamil schools were staffed by men qualified in Malayalam, perhaps for want of men qualified in Tamil, and that the purity of the Tamil language would be lost if such a state of affairs was allowed to continue. In view of the dearth of men qualified in Tamil, owing to the neglected condition of Tamil for the last 35 years, the Member reiterated the request made by him last year that some relaxation might be made in regard to the age and examination qualifications prescribed in the Education Code in respect of Tamil teachers.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly